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THOMAS A. NICHOLSON LETTERS, 1861

#5006-z

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Thomas A. Nicholson Letters, 1861.

#5006-z

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Inventory of the Thomas A. Nicholson Letters, 1861

Collection Number 5006-z

Manuscripts Department, Library of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Collection Information

- Descriptive Summary
- Administrative Information
- Online Catalog Heading
- Biographical Note
- Collection Overview
- Detailed Description of the Collection

Contact Information:

Manuscripts Department
CB#3926, Wilson Library
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-8890
Phone: 919/962-1345
Fax: 919/962-3594
Email: mss@email.unc.edu
URL: http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss

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Descriptive Summary

Repository
Southern Historical Collection

Creator
Nicholson, Thomas A.

Title
Thomas A. Nicholson Letters, 1861

Call Number
5006-z

Language of Materials
Materials in English

Extent
Items: 5

Abstract

Thomas A Nicholson joined the Stonewall Brigade (Company D of the 2nd Virginia Infantry Regiment) at Winchester, Va., on 18 July 1861. After brief stays at Harper's Ferry, Va., and Manassas Hospital, he spent much of what is known of the rest of his military career at Camp Centerville, Va. He does not appear on the muster rolls for his unit after December 1861. The collection consists of five letters of Virginia Civil War soldier Thomas A. Nicholson to his mother and sister, May-November 1861, while Nicholson was serving in the Stonewall Brigade. The letters discuss various aspects of military life; Nicholson's stay in Manassas hospital; his desire to meet the Union Army in battle; and his unit's prospective move to winter quarters at Winchester, Va., in the Shenandoah Valley.

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Administrative Information

Restrictions to Access

No restrictions.

Alternate Form of Material

Microfilm copy (filmed July 2005) available.

Reel 1: Entire collection

Acquisitions Information

Received from the McGowan Book Company of Chapel Hill, N.C., in December 1999 (Acc. 98520).

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Online Catalog Headings

These and related materials may be found under the following headings in online catalogs.

Camp Centerville (Va.).
Confederate States of America. Army--Military life.
Confederate States of America. Army--Hospitals.
Confederate States of America. Army. Stonewall Brigade.
Nicholson, Thomas A.
Soldiers--Confederate States of America--Correspondence.
Virginia--History--Civil War, 1861-1865.

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Biographical Note

Thomas A. Nicholson joined the Confederate Army at Winchester, Va., on 18 July 1861. He served in the Stonewall Brigade (Company D, 2nd Virginia Infantry Regiment). In September 1861, he spent time in Manassas Hospital with an ankle injury and complaints of weakness and chest pain. By the end of that month, he had rejoined his unit and was anxious to see combat. His letters originate from Camp Centerville, Va., and discuss the prospect that his unit was to be sent to winter quarters at Winchester, Va., in the Shenandoah Valley. Nicholson does not appear on the muster rolls for the Stonewall Brigade after December 1861.

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Collection Overview

The collection consists of five letters of Virginia Civil War soldier Thomas A. Nicholson to his mother and sister, May-November 1861, while Nicholson was serving in the Stonewall Brigade (Company D, 2nd Virginia Infantry Regiment). The letters discuss various aspects of military life; Nicholson's stay in Manassas Hospital; his desire to meet the Union Army in battle; and his unit's prospective move to winter quarters at Winchester, Va., in the Shenandoah Valley.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Letters, 1861.
5 items.

Arrangement: chronological.

Folder 1
Letters

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#5006-z
THOMAS A. NICHOLSON LETTERS

1861

Folder 1 of 1

Harper's Ferry - Va.
Saturday, May 25 / 61.

My darling Mother, No doubt you have been very anxious about your boy, but he really has not had time to pen a line since he came down from your back. I hasten to tell you I am very well, tho' very sore from fatigue, having been on special duty in Loudon and Jefferson County and hard duty it was. Six of us slept in the bushes, on our arms, and rolled only in our blankets. I am not yet permanently attached to any Regiment, tho' doing duty with the 1st Artillery. Many of my old shipmates are with us. I am in first rate spirits, as I am actively employed. We have no more cases of small pox. It is raining like blazes! - There is a retreat going on here; I intend trying to get to my duties to morrow. Everything is going finely in preparation. Try to keep up your spirits & pray for

Your devoted boy
Tom -

Love to all.

My darling Sister -

I much add you a line tho' very much pressed for time.

Some of Phil's things, consisting of 9 chairs, and an old small table were yesterday taken by Dr. Haller - for private quarters in the house of Zante's; I took the liberty of seeing that nothing else was taken, & none but my self entered the room. I will get a receipt for them as soon as valued, signed by the Quarter master today & send it as soon as possible to you. Have you any objection? I will write when I can. Kindest love to all. Can you send me two wht. side flannel Shirts if you have them made? - There are about ~~[illegible]~~ 15.000 troops here, and all in fine spirits. - Gen. Johnson is in command. - I will not take service in the C. S. Navy, as the whole branch of the War seems directed this way. God bless you all: love to all. Pray for your

devoted brother

Tom -

Later

[illegible]

As soon as got in this country

[illegible] duty.

[illegible]

[illegible] spirits. — Rochester

Jesse

Camp Pickett
Sunday, 29th Sept. 1861.

My dear good Mother,

I am just about to leave Camp, having been detained here by the intense pain in my bowels. My ankle is nearly well, but I am still very weak. When I left home I managed to get a very comfortable seat in the stage, without a unpleasant drive to Norfolk, in company with an Aide-de-Camp to Genl. Huger, and some other officers, coming thus we remained at the Hotel till 9 o'clock, when we took the cars for Petersburg. Fortunately there were but few passengers, so we had comfortable seats, and slept all the way. We reached the Depot about 1 o'clock, and after waiting for the baggage, we were both so much fatigued that we were comfortably settled at the Jamestown Dining Hall about 3 o'clock. Leaving our baggage there to be sent for, we started for Camp, which is the distance is nearly ten miles. I gave out, and came back. That night I had such fever that the Dr. took alarm, & gave me a dose of Blue Pill & Quinine, which brought me round. Yesterday I was very feverish, but today I feel much better. Still I am very weak. Arnold is my tent-mate. I have been expecting every day to get home, but have the mortification to know that our regiment has gone on picket ten miles down the river, & I am unable to do more than hobble.

P.S.

Mr. Custer sends his warmest respects: he always inquires for you and Nannie: he writes to his wife by every chance, and is the same good-natured fellow he always was. — Mr. Cheually has just come into Camp with a wagon load of bread &c: he has two sons in our company — Phil. don't give much news. — We expect Lambert back today. —

Late

[illegible]

Col. [illegible]

As soon as get in this vicinity

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Spirits. — In haste yours

[illegible]

[illegible] Hospital
Thursday, 19th Sept. 1861.

My dear good Mother,

I am just about to leave Camp, having been delivered here by the intense pain in my bowels. My sickness is nearly well, but I am still very weak. When I left your I managed to get a very comfortable seat in the stage, without any very unpleasant difficulty. We had an agreeable companion with us, an officer of the Indiana 19th, who had been wounded at the battle of [illegible] and was now on his way home. Arriving at Fairmont City, we had the pleasure of seeing our baggage thrown out upon the platform, and we were left with it, the train moving off without discharging any of its passengers. Leaving our baggage there to be sent for, we started for camp, which is the distance of nearly ten miles. I gave out, and came here. Had I walked I should have such a headache that I should have fainted. [illegible] a good deal of [illegible] on my head, which has been all afflicted to my bowels. Omitted to my bowels. I have been keeping very quiet here, but have the mortification to know that our regiment has gone on picket ten miles down the road. I am here unable to do more than hobble.

But I am going down to Fairfax today, as this Hospital is about to be broken up, as being too distant from Camp. I have just borrowed some ink, as it pains my eyes so to write with pencil by candle-light. — One Regiment at a time of our Brigade is sent 10 or 15 miles below Fairfax, to stand picket-guard; it remains there one or two days and is then relieved by another. It is a post of honor as well as danger, and I cannot but very much regret my inability to share all with our Regiment; but you know, my Mother, that my will was good to be there. — I was so afraid you would think hard of my anxiety to get back, and attribute it to other motives than our earnest desire to be at my post. I may be of some service in Camp, if I cannot get over all the fatigues of regular duty, and I know our glorious Captain will appreciate my efforts. I am just commencing this to you not knowing how or when I shall send it, but I wish to be ready always with at least a note for every opportunity. — We heard here today that the Yankees had again entered Martinsburg, and taken nine hundred inlisted prisoners; it is said to have occurred on Saturday last; few credit it, but it seems to me there must be something in it. —

My dear Mother, The Day Latest. 9/61

Lieut. Phil. Cunningham has just arrived, and brought me your letter of Sunday, 22nd — and welcome it was, my own dear Mother. — I was just finishing my letter to you when it arrived, and I hasten to acknowledge its receipt, and reply hurriedly. By this time you have one letter from me, I hope, sent since I left you: I could not write sooner — not one word of Court Martial, or anything of the kind have I heard as yet: on the contrary, Capt. N. seemed surprised at my coming so soon back: he had received my letter to him, stating my accident, condition and whereabouts, and was satisfied. — I am very glad you heard from Katie; it seems to grieve her so much to be cut off from you. I wrote to her this morning. — I am sorry to hear such news from Philo. Could he not get Pickens's hands? — I tell Katie to consult you and Uncle Richard, and be governed by your advice: if you possibly can, dear Mother, let her stay with you: she has enough at home to set her crazy: I will do all I can to repay you! — I am sorry to hear Jesse is coming down: he will not be content; but every one has to buy his own experience. — Kind remembrances to all. Love to Mary Colvard Wise. — Yes, Beauregard is a practical Catholic, and that is a great comfort to us: we cannot fail with such a leader! — Love to Nannie; tell her she must not forget me in her correspondence. — Regards to Susan. —

Now Good-by! God bless you! It is so pleasant to hear from you! You can expect letters by every opportunity. Keep up your spirits, my own Mother! Katie will be an affectionate daughter to you. — Tell Susan to send me a corn-dodger by the next wagon. — Kind remembrances to the Roses all. God bless you! Your own boy

Jim.

P.S.

Mr. Custer sends his warmest respects: he always inquires for you and Tommie: he writes to his wife by every chance, and is the same good-natured fellow he always was. — Mr. Cheually has just come into Camp with a wagon-load of bundles: he has two sons in our company — Phil. don't give much news. — We expect Lambert back today. —

Camp at Centreville –
Saturday Night, Feb 23rd 1861

My dear Mother

I wrote a letter by Mr
Black the day before yesterday, & I hope
you have received it by this time. We have
had a very disagreeable week, & I think
it is something like a repetition of last
year. Mine, Good, for the Black & White
have been back as yet, the 27th day, & they are
afraid that they have passed Fort Monroe
on the 25th of this month. We have
been hungry with cold for two weeks, & so
forth & so on. Apart the cold, I am comfortable
enough, but we have no money. It is reported
that the Secretary of War has received money
& that we will get it in a day or two.
But we are so used to disappointment we don't
get it. I have not attempted to copy the
Stolen letter yet, as I have no money for
postage; when you write to me, send me two
and tell me as soon as I can. I will write
you a long letter, & by that time I may have
plenty of news; for we cannot be long quiet

Our Regiment was ordered three miles
behind, for it being so dark, we left behind
our Knapsacks & Camp-kettles, & lying down
in our blankets & clothing & taking up our
line of battle, we lay down in the
woods. Although we had with us small
tents & knapsacks, we were obliged to
sleep, & lying down in the rain, & lying upon
the ground, the cold sometimes strong the
chill. I had with me a good Army Blanket
& by wrapping it round me I did not suffer
so much as I should have done
otherwise. I have had no more good
fortune since I last left Home, we have been
in a very uncomfortable place: the ground
is so soft that it is very difficult
marching on it. It seems to be threatening
snow to night. The Rebels were have taken the
Southern route, flying before us. We suffer
good deal from cold, but hope we will soon
become accustomed to it. We made a fire
place in our tents, & by being patient & hardy
little warm, we are more comfortable than
before: Our Leather also tents cover us,

All of the boys down here are pretty perfect heaters, tho' I am complaining a little. Camp is generally healthy and they have left more than one sick at each rendezvous in camp, and I hear about from nearly all, & find myself more quiet. — I suppose some of our beat to the same battle we got into in Daily; we drill an hour and a half morning and evening, & some parts of it are very laborious. Col. Allen is on detached duty on Richmond, & Col. Potts commands us; he is very polite & gentlemanly, & we have plenty of regulars. We have no definite news down here; all is mere rumors, and I have not had time my letters with rumors: you know all I know before I do. — Please send me one undershirt & there was any in those washed clothes, and another pair of socks; also a pair of drawers: nothing else in the shape of clothing: but put a couple of steel pens in the bundle. — I have a bundle. — Haven't any old gloves at home? The gun barrel feels very cold to my bare hands: but don't you have any

I wish I could see you & hear anything of
Edwin James & Co. I have never heard a word
to them by letter. I feel strange & uneasy
to know what you may make of it
get in touch with them & let me know
Earth. It is all the news I have
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] I am well & the
[illegible] I have had a letter from Mr
Cumberland but it has been said on the
subject since the recent fighting near here
no hope for a fight here. Clark Mitchell
comes to camp sometimes he is fat & healthy
Kate says she has written to Mr Stokes
Sergt. Kelly has gone to Savannah with his
family. I feel I cannot write to Mr
[illegible]
to comfort Kate. Write to Kate when you
can & give her something about me she
is very lonely poor thing! I could use ink
this time, as my pen is broken, and I don't
like to borrow. Kind love to Annie. God bless
you dear good Mother! Mark W. B. & Jenny for
me. Kind regards to Mr & B. God bless you!

Ever your devoted boy Tom.

Camp at Centreville — Feb: 27th 186[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] this morning [illegible]

[illegible] my [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] that [illegible]

[illegible] on my only remaining [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] still [illegible]

[illegible]

be [illegible] of the [illegible] guard

[illegible]

[illegible] the last four days [illegible]

[illegible] as I [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] the Blue

[illegible] that [illegible] between [illegible]

we are assured that [illegible]

Brigade in the Valley, either to winter quarters at Winchester or in its vicinity: our Division is expected back from Culpeper today, and we will then be better able to judge of the probability. Time, perhaps, will prove that this work, but that is highly improbable. At all events, we expect to be paid off in a few days, and this is good news. Next, capt Gatling, I am good by, and must bear the cold, exposure, &c. I know I shall be expected to give my profile to each man I know, and all in that street, so I mention that to be misunderstood. Well, here is Mr. Lockett, who has come over from the Cottilling on his way to Winchester, so he is in a hurry to go, and I wish him to take this to you. I must unwillingly close. The prospect of a big fight daunts me very generally well: weather alternately cool, warm & cold: no very stirring news: the Yankees have again fallen back: our Captain says we shall go home. — Hunter desires to be remembered. Kind love to all.

Tell Mother to send me 1 pair of drawers, one pair socks, a couple of steel pens, and news that she & you all are well and not frightened about the Federals — all comfort of me humble, by the first opportunity. I'll bet you don't parse that sentence! —

Cockie is hurrying me & I will write again soon. — God bless you all. Regards to Susan. Your fond brother

Camp at Centreville.

My dear Mother, December 5th.

Yours of the 27th ult. I received yesterday, with letter from Mr. Edwards, which was all I desired, with the exception of not being able to see you. A disappointed life will soon be over, so we must not repine at it. Life is a chequered one in our first in hope to see a general return of the blessing to us as well as to you, alone the hope of your health, which I fear bad letters will be injurious to, I expect you, but I could not see it being a point to urge it this year. What you say kindly in your letter, in regard to writing to me, I do not see you fail to be not application. It is to me the most welcome letter I receive from home. It is to you I appreciate them most. I only did with which money was I would wish to do with mine, which and this I would at once but the I did not see it, and could not get him to do so. I can infer the amount have to be as high as 50 days. I am sorry to note your low spirits, my own dear Mother. Would to Heaven I could help you more! But we must all wait patiently to God. Does that dear one still go to the mill hills? Try to get anything when I can get the mill and you some. The various rumors among you must keep you in a perfect fever; but I have full confidence in God's fulfilment of the word of the age, and all will be well. I believe

Tired of our long stay in Camp from home yesterday. Cline, in Company, I think, and I came on to this city. I found my other flannel shirts than it was on me not one; they will be sufficient for the present, and I send me any more. Write by the send my soiled clothes, but do not be trouble about them; I get on very well. I have to wait for permission for the secretary of War before I can appear before the Examining Board. Of course will do my best to get it; permission is granted more but much political influence is exerted against. I cannot blame Uncle Richard, being the alleged facts. Please do not mention the subject to him any more. It is hoped Allen but not known that our Brigade is ordered to the Battery but when we last saw our boys Gen. Brown sent word to Col. Allen that we would have a fight within ten days; but we since heard from Washington that all the Federal Officers are ready and eager for a fight, they could not get the men up to the sticking point. I see the shade in the Union of Georgia. I am very sorry to hear it, although I have expected a long letter before. Do not amount yourself my dear mother; I will be home myself. You are weaning yourself down for our sake, and we can but regret you the extremities without being all in vain. It is very hard; but time is common to think of it. I only wish to know they would take us up to the Battery. We would soon clear out the scoundrels as we did down here only that we would not stop until they were across the River. We will probably have something to-day of our intended movements.

There was another grand review the gala day — the hour of general relaxation for our spirits indeed, my dear Sis, if we can only count to Heaven and bear with patience the present ills, the future will be dark enough — I am glad to hear you had some supplies from Mr. Baldwin: he seemed to me more pitied for the father than the child. Kindest regards to Mr. Keeler & the Dr. I am sorry I did not receive letters from home to write that I have not as yet accomplished my intention of forwarding him an epistle. — Mr. Matthews is the one who used to work with me for James, Stoven & Miller: he is in great trouble, his wife being a strong Union woman. Cowles, Wolfe, McDonald, Kelly & all are well, and have been paid off. I, too, remain sound and unless see what I can share at present: we will be paid off again on the 5th of this month, and then off to the 2d of the south. Use the little rule, my own dear Brother, as you can: would to God it was ten times as much!

The blue letter most acceptable. I lost with part of my baggage after the raid. Still I'll be glad the surgeon most pointed hopes to me the sufficient expense, as apparently with no good result but the time will come. Mrs. Hage has also visited the Army: the only reply was riddled with balls — very much injured; but all will be made good by the Confederacy. I have not tasted anything stronger than Coffee for a long time: nor do I intend to again until God shall grant this resolution, my own dear Brother: pray for me that I may not again fall into the grovelling habit. —

I delivered your messages to the boys and all seemed much
pleased to hear from home. I received a great many letters now more
than I do all are well. Lieut. Dowell is the Captain's right hand
man. Thank for your letter. I do not know I have more at
present. Eph. Cushing sends you word he can't get any rock in Washing-
ton making bread! and indeed, he has made a great improvement
on the army slap jacks. Our fortifications are progressing rapidly,
and everything denotes something very important coming. Hard
to say. Charlie still has hopes of a letter from his young friend
I expect by next mail. It is threatening rain,
will be a cold one but we have enough wood in our hut yet to keep
and our furnace still draws well in spite of the flue board
chimney we have heard. I hear from Katie frequently she is
in good spirits at home but misses her mother sadly. She
always sends much love to you all. I now must let me be
seen or of service to you any more, my dear mother. I am hoping my
best, and feel happy. I will send Katie some money, but will tell
her to remain where she is until things are quieter. Perhaps we may
be in the Valley in a week, so we can tell. Love to Mary Ellen
God bless you all! I hope this may reach you speedily, a little
contrab seems to add to our comfort. I will write when I can.
Remember me to all! Your devoted son,

Geo.

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